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1997

The Wild and Scenic *Snake River* Boater's Guide

Hells Canyon National Recreation Area



Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

OR, ID, WA

1997

Forest



Service

United States Department of Agriculture



"...certain selected rivers of the Nation which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition, and that they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations."

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act,
October 2, 1968

"...to assure that the natural beauty, and historical and archeological values of the Hells Canyon area and the seventy-one mile segment of the Snake River between Hells Canyon Dam and the Oregon-Washington border, together with portions of certain of its tributaries and adjacent lands, are preserved for this and future generations..."

Hells Canyon National Recreation Area Act,
December 31, 1975



WELCOME TO THE WILD AND SCENIC SNAKE RIVER

Hells Canyon National Recreation Area (HCNRA) straddles the Snake River, which forms the boundary between Idaho and Oregon. The 652,488-acre recreation area was created by an act of Congress in 1975. Although the HCNRA includes portions of the Nez Perce, Payette and Wallowa-Whitman national forests, it is managed by the Wallowa-Whitman. The Hells Canyon Wilderness comprises nearly 215,000 acres within the HCNRA.



Jane Rohling

Hells Canyon is accessible year-round. Snow on the peaks above the river adds a dramatic touch to the landscape.

About 67.5 miles of the Snake River in Hells Canyon National Recreation Area were designated in 1975 as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Here, the river is managed to preserve its free-flowing character and unique environment while providing for continued public use.

The 31.5-mile section of the river between Hells Canyon Dam and Upper Pittsburg Landing is designated *wild* under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. This act defines *wild* as “free of impoundments and generally accessible only by trail” representing “vestiges of primitive America.” The 36-mile section of river

downstream from Upper Pittsburg Landing to mile 180.2 is designated *scenic*, which is defined as “free of impoundments with shorelines and watersheds still largely primitive, and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.” An additional 4.2 miles of the river from mile 180.2 north to the HCNRA boundary at the Oregon-Washington line is recommended for scenic designation.

The Wild and Scenic Snake River corridor extends approximately one-quarter mile back from the high water mark on each shore. The river corridor itself is not wilderness and wilderness regulations do not apply. Developed campsites and manmade structures exist, and some motorized equipment is allowed. Some areas on either side of the corridor, however, are designated *wilderness*, and are closed to all mechanized travel. If you want to visit the wilderness it must be on foot or horseback.



View of the Snake River from Hat Point, the highest point on the Oregon rim, elevation 6,982 feet. The white spot in the river is Rush Creek Rapids.

Although uncommon on most wild and scenic rivers, powerboats have been used on the Snake River in Hells Canyon for many years and Congress included specific language in the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area Act which allows their continued use.

HELLS CANYON OF THE SNAKE RIVER

The mighty Snake River winds its way through Hells Canyon, the deepest river-carved gorge in North America. At the mouth of Granite Creek, approximately seven miles downstream from Hells Canyon Dam, the river elevation is 1,480 feet. The canyon depth here is 7,913 feet when measured from He Devil Mountain, towering over Idaho's Seven Devils range at 9,393 feet. Above Rush Creek Rapids, Hat Point Lookout offers a spectacular view of the canyon from 6,982 feet, the highest point on the Oregon rim.

The perpetuation of this unique environment is largely dependent upon you, the user. With a growing number of visitors, thoughtful and appropriate behavior by all is essential to the protection of the canyon's outstanding aesthetic and environmental values. Techniques are discussed in this guide which can allow visitors to enjoy the river to the fullest while preserving its fragile natural and cultural resources. The challenge is to pass through the area and leave no trace that you were there.

Steep, narrow Hells Canyon trails can be challenging—on foot or on horseback—but they offer an entirely different perspective of the canyon and an appreciation of what it was like to live here.



Violet Wilson Shirley

Hells Canyon National Recreation Area has 925 miles of trails, which provide outstanding opportunities for hunting, fishing, backpacking, horseback riding, mountain biking, photography and many other recreational pursuits. The Snake River National Recreation Trail (Trail #102) extends 30 miles from Pittsburg Landing to Butler Bar on the Idaho side of the Snake River. On the Oregon side, the Snake River Trail (Trail #1726) parallels the river from Dug Bar to Battle Creek, 45.5 miles. Both trails offer several loop possibilities on side trails leading up to the higher elevation bench and summit trails. Only about 12% of the National Recreation Area is accessible by roads.



Jane Rohling

Hikers on the Snake River National Recreation Trail (ID) about 1/2 mile downstream from Kirkwood, looking downriver.



Commercial outfitters offer jet boat and float trips from Hells Canyon Creek Recreation Site, Pittsburg Landing and Lewiston/Clarkston area year-round.

Drift boats below Hells Canyon Creek Recreation Site. Most float trips begin here and take out at Pittsburg Landing. Some go on to Dug Bar or Heller Bar.



SOME THINGS EVERY HELLS CANYON BOATER SHOULD KNOW

BOATING PERMITS AND REGULATIONS

- Permits are required year-round for all non-commercial floaters and power-boaters on the Snake River within the HCNRA. Take time to read the regulations printed on the back of the permit before embarking on your trip.

- During the primary river season, reservations and trip permits issued by the Forest Service are required to launch trips at specific locations along the river. For information on powerboat or float permits and reservations, call the appropriate river information/reservation number listed on the inside back cover.
- A special use permit issued by the Forest Service is required for outfitting and guiding of all commercial float and powerboat trips within the boundaries of the HCNRA. Any of the HCNRA offices can provide you with a list of outfitters who are permitted to operate in Hells Canyon NRA. Rewards of up to \$500 are offered for information leading to convictions for commercial outfitting or guiding without a permit.



Jane Rohling

Rafts and kayaks wait in an eddy for other boats to come through rapids.

RECOMMENDED CRAFT

Rafts (12 feet and over, rigged for whitewater), kayaks, drift boats, whitewater canoes and powerboats are used in Hells Canyon. Open canoes are not recommended due to difficult portages and heavy whitewater. Welded aluminum powerboats with jet pumps are preferred for powerboating in the river's shallow water. Propeller-driven boats are often used downstream of the Imnaha Rapids. Some types of non-traditional float and motorized craft are not allowed (i.e. personal watercraft, sailboards, etc.)

The Forest Service doesn't inspect boating equipment, except for specialized equipment required under Forest Service regulations to protect the river environment (i.e. fire pans, carry-out waste systems, fuel absorption pads, etc.). It is your responsibility as a boater to ensure that you have the proper safety equipment on board and that your craft is in good operating condition. Also, be sure to carry good, serviceable PFDs (Personal Flotation Devices), suitable for whitewater.

Remember: the type and size of craft should be geared to river conditions and personal skill level, and a PFD helps you only when it is worn properly!



Power and float boats share facilities at Hells Canyon Creek Recreation Site (below), Pittsburg Landing (right), Dug Bar and Heller Bar.



LAUNCHING AND LANDING

The Hells Canyon Creek Recreation Site, 1/2 mile downstream from Hells Canyon Dam, has a concrete launch ramp. However, space is limited. Anyone planning to launch or land directly from a trailer should have a vehicle with good traction. The concrete ramp is steep. At flows below 6,000 cfs (cubic feet per second), this ramp is unsuitable for launching and landing boats that require the trailer to be in the water. This site, 19 miles north of Copperfield (Oxbow), OR, is accessible year-round via a paved Idaho Power Company road.

The launch site at Pittsburg Landing on the Idaho side of the river has a concrete apron and boat ramp. At river flows below 5,000 cfs, this ramp is unsuitable for launching or landing powerboats. The site is accessible year-round via a 19-mile single lane gravel road with turnouts. Turn west off of US Highway 95 just south of Whitebird, ID and cross the Salmon River bridge to get to Pittsburg Road. This road is steep, with grades up to 16%. Be sure your brakes and transmission are in good condition before beginning the drive, and use low gears.

Dug Bar, on the Oregon side, has a concrete boat ramp. The Dug Bar Road, heading north from Imnaha, requires a high clearance, 4WD vehicle, and is very slippery when wet. This is a single lane, dirt road with turnouts and should be driven with extreme caution.

The Heller Bar launch site is owned by the State of Washington and operated by the Bureau of Land Management. The site, located just downstream from the mouth of the Grande Ronde River, approximately 23 miles south of Asotin, WA, is accessible year-round. The first 11 miles south of Asotin are paved, the rest is gravel.



Jane Rohling

Ramps are busy places during the peak summer months. Please be courteous and load or unload quickly.

RAMP ETIQUETTE

- Be organized before you get to the ramp so your group can launch or take out quickly. Don't set up or take down your float equipment, or load and unload gear from your powerboat on a ramp if other space is available. And please, do not eat lunch on the ramp!
- To expedite float launches, electricity is available at Hells Canyon Creek so that power blowers can be used for inflating boats.
- Powerboaters share all launch/landing sites with floaters, and they *must* use the ramps to reach the water.

Respect the rights of all other river users. A little courtesy goes a long way!

MOORING BOATS

River flows vary, and can change rapidly, because of power generation through Hells Canyon Dam. Your boat could be left high and dry or filled with water within an hour if moored too close to the shore. To avoid these situations, jet-boats or similar craft should be moored away from the bank with the bow toward the river and the stern toward the bank. If the river falls and your boat is grounded, this will aid in getting it free. When the river rises, so will the bow of the boat. If the heavier stern is toward the river, the boat may sink before there is enough buoyancy to float the weight of the entire boat.



Jane Rohling

Whether float or powerboats have the right of way depends on the situation. Common sense, safety and courtesy should be your guides.

RULES OF THE ROAD

Be aware of dangerous situations and avoid putting either yourself or another person in jeopardy.

- Powerboaters and floaters share the Wild and Scenic Snake River in Hells Canyon. The river experience will be more enjoyable for everyone if all river users treat each other with courtesy and respect.
- As a general rule, craft moving downstream have the right-of-way, however, they don't have the right to intentionally block navigation. Craft moving upstream through rapids should eddy-out when possible and let the downstream craft pass.
- **An exception occurs when a boat has either committed to or entered a rapid, from upstream or downstream. In this situation, all other craft should wait until the boat is clear before proceeding.**
- Floaters, be aware that powerboats can only travel in narrow channels in some sections of the river. When you see a powerboat coming, pull to one side of the channel, if possible, and let it by.
- Jet boats draw less water and create shallower wakes at higher speeds when the boat is on plane, and they can't always slow down due to shallow water. Floaters, give the powerboat the deep channel if you have a choice.



Hells Canyon beaches are fragile environments. Practicing the no-trace camping techniques in this guide will help protect them.

- Powerboaters must slow to a “no wake” speed at docks and boat landing facilities. Be cautious and courteous when passing other boats, especially when they are moored along shore. Slow down if possible, and give them a wide berth.

MINIMUM IMPACT RIVER CAMPING

CAMPSITES

Due to the rugged terrain in Hells Canyon, and the effects of upstream dams, campsites are limited in number, especially in the wild section of the river. Campsites in this section, between Hells Canyon Dam and Upper Pittsburg Landing, may have special camping requirements. Be sure to check for current regulations on campsites prior to your trip. Some popular campsites have limited overnight stay lengths. A list of these sites is on the back of the river permit.

Overnight camping is prohibited at Hells Canyon Creek Recreation Site and Cache Creek Administrative Site. South of Hells Canyon Dam, there are a number of campgrounds available along Hells Canyon Reservoir.

Camping is also prohibited at the Pittsburg Landing boat launch area. The 28-unit Pittsburg Campground is approximately 1/4 mile from the river. Six tent sites on the river are also available at Upper Pittsburg Landing.

Most campsites are on grassy benches. There are very few sandy beaches along the Snake River above its confluence with the Salmon River. High water in the spring erodes the sand but doesn't replace it. Most of the sediment that would naturally contribute to the beach rebuilding process is now deposited in slack water behind upstream dams. The beaches that remain are very fragile. Please stay on trails as much as possible to reduce your impact. Also, be aware that many campsites are on alluvial fans (relatively flat areas made of rock and silt that builds up at the mouths of creeks). These areas are subject to flash flooding during periods of heavy rainfall and/or snowmelt (especially during late winter or spring). Use caution when camping in these areas under these conditions.

Obtain water from side streams rather than the Snake River, however microorganisms like *Giardia* may be present in these streams. To be safe, boil, filter or chemically treat all drinking, cooking and dish washing water.

WASTE DISPOSAL

Solid human waste carry out systems are required for all boaters year round. Contact one of the Snake River information/reservation numbers on the inside back cover for additional information and locations of disposal facilities.

- At camp, set up your toilet facilities in a location that is screened from view and at least 100 feet from water.
- Several wildfires have been started by well-meaning campers burning toilet paper—**don't do it!**
- Be sure that soap and water are available so that hands can be washed after using the toilet. Serious disease problems among river users have been traced to poor personal hygiene and food handling.
- Bathe well away from the river, using a bucket. Biodegradable soaps should always be used, but *even they* don't belong in the river.
- Carry and use a tarp as a kitchen floor. Set up your table and stove on top of this tarp so food scraps and other small trash will fall on the tarp rather than disappearing in the sand. When you clean up, pour everything from the tarp into your trash bag.
- Wash dishes well away from camp where inadvertent spills won't attract flies. Strain food particles from dishwater and disperse the waste water on the ground at least 100 feet away from the river and from camp. Do not dig waste pits.
- Food scraps and other waste left at campsites make pests out of skunks, bears and other wildlife. Please keep wildlife wild! Do not intentionally feed wildlife and pack out all garbage.

TRASH: PACK IT OUT

River users are responsible for carrying out all trash and garbage. There are no facilities for garbage pick-up at the launching/landing sites, or anywhere else in the river corridor.

- For trash, use bailing buckets or other containers lined with garbage bags at the campsite.
- Everything should be compacted and packed out. Recycle whenever possible. Repackage food into reusable containers before your trip. Use knots instead of twist ties to close plastic bags.
- Keep trash bags handy during the day for empty beverage cans and litter. Consider separating organic waste from trash so it can be taken home and composted.
- Never sink cans or bottles in the river.
- Cigarette butts don't belong on the ground or in the river. If you smoke, put cigarette butts in your pocket or trash bag and pack them out.
- Before leaving camp, make a final check for small trash such as cigarette butts and twist ties.

Wash dishes with biodegradable soap. Strain food particles from water and put in trash bag. Spread waste water on ground at least 100 feet from river.



River users must carry out solid human waste. Several portable toilets designed for this purpose are available from outdoor equipment stores.



Remember, all trash must be carried out with you. No trash is to be buried. Burning and burying are ineffective and inappropriate disposal methods. Leave no trace of your stay, and strive to leave each camp in better shape than you found it.

FIRES

A firepan must be used for all campfires in the river corridor year round; open fires are prohibited. From July 1 to September 15, no wood fires are allowed, even in firepans! Ashes are to be packed out of the canyon and properly disposed of.



Campers with firepan. Ashes will be put in the wet burlap bag in the bucket to be packed out.

Permissible heat sources are:

- 1) **Enclosed wood stoves:** The stoves must be enclosed on all six sides with 1/4 inch or smaller screening covering the chimney opening.
- 2) **Gas stoves:** Pressurized liquid or gas stoves, including space heating devices.
- 3) **Firepans:** From July 1 to September 15, firepans may be used with charcoal only. September 16 to June 30, wood or charcoal may be used in the fire pan. Partially-consumed charcoal briquettes must be packed out.

A firepan is any type of durable metal container which has sides high enough to contain the charcoal and all of the ashes. For instance, a barbecue with a grill could be used as a fire pan. Ashes and charcoal are to be carried out with you. Please, don't bury charcoal—it lasts for years in the soil.

Fire blackens rocks and sand. Firepans keep the area clean and help prevent the numerous fire scars found at popular sites. They also assure a dead-out fire. Most campsites are located on grassy river bars or benches and in the hot, dry months of summer, a stray spark can send fire racing up the hillside.

In the harsh environment of Hells Canyon, trees and shrubs only thrive close to water—the same locations where most people choose to camp. Removal of wood from these areas for campfires degrades wildlife habitat and scenery. To protect these resources, it is illegal to cut live, dead or downed trees or other vegetation, or to collect driftwood to burn, within 1/4 mile of the river. River users who plan to burn wood in a firepan during the open burning season must carry wood in with them.

FIREARMS

Discharging a firearm within or near an occupied area, such as a campsite, is prohibited.

Do not discharge firearms across the river or shoot at objects floating in the river.

Indiscriminate use of firearms by a few individuals can cause many people to become concerned. The discharge of firearms within 150 yards of a campsite or occupied area, or in a manner that exposes people or property to injury or damage, is prohibited. Trip leaders are held responsible for improper use of firearms by members of their party.

Jane Rohling

Native Americans and early ranchers were attracted to the mild winters in the canyon, moving to higher elevations during the heat of the summer. The "McGaffee" cabin at Bernard Creek was the second one built by Bill Hiltzley, who homesteaded here in 1901.



SEASONS IN THE CANYON

The river can be traversed year round by powerboaters and floaters who are prepared for the weather, however, May through October are the most popular months. Summers are usually hot with temperatures often soaring above the 100-degree mark.

Both spring and fall can be cold and rainy. Water temperatures can also be cold during these months, so you should be equipped to avoid hypothermia.

River flows vary daily, but are most commonly high during the spring and early summer. Very high and very low flows can both pose special hazards for boaters. **Read the water carefully!**

HYPOTHERMIA: NOT JUST A WINTER THREAT

When body heat is lost more rapidly than it is produced hypothermia is a serious threat. This can occur when the combined water and air temperatures are below 100°F. Know how to prevent and treat this potential killer!



Weather can change quickly in the canyon. Be sure to be prepared for anything! On a rainy, windy day, hypothermia is a threat, even during the summer months.

- Symptoms: Slurred speech, irrational behavior and inability to make sound decisions, clumsiness, uncontrollable shivering.
- Strip victim and replace wet clothing.
- Provide shelter from elements (tent, tarp, natural shelter), and start a fire for warmth.
- Raise the victim's body temperature, warming the trunk area first. Wrap victim in blanket or sleeping bag. Exercise, then remove your clothing and get in with victim, or wrap victim in a blanket with an external heat (i.e. hot water bottles or warm rocks wrapped in clothing). Insulate areas of rapid heat loss—the head, neck, sides and groin.
- Get professional medical assistance as quickly as possible!

WILD THINGS TO BE AWARE OF

There are a few hazards besides steep canyon walls, falling rocks and big rapids for which Hells Canyon is famous. Many unpleasant encounters can be avoided simply by watching where you put your hands and feet and being aware of what's going on around you!

- Western rattlesnakes, black widow and brown recluse spiders are common. Know how to identify these venomous animals and their bites. Be aware of proper first aid procedures and seek medical attention as quickly as possible if bitten.
- Check your clothes often for ticks. Repellents will discourage most other insect pests.
- Poison ivy is abundant along the Snake River and side drainages. Look out for low-growing (from a few inches to several feet tall), shiny-leaved shrubbery or stalks with three leaflets. White berries appear in late summer and persist through winter; the leaves turn red in early fall. Contact with any part of these plants can produce allergic reactions during any season.

- Cougars are present in Hells Canyon and sightings in the river corridor have increased significantly in recent years. Cougar attacks on humans are rare, but should you have a close encounter with one: (1) stand your ground and face the cat, do not turn around and walk or run away, as this may stimulate the lion's instinct to chase and attack; (2) do not approach the animal, give it an escape path; (3) keep children close to you, take them in your arms; (4) make lots of noise and stand tall, making yourself appear bigger than the lion; and (5) fight back if you are attacked.
- Black bears occasionally cause problems in the river corridor. Check with Forest Service staff before you launch to find out whether there are campsites known to have bear problems and avoid these sites. Do not pitch tents in obvious game trails, don't eat in tents, take the usual precautions with food storage, and carry out all garbage.

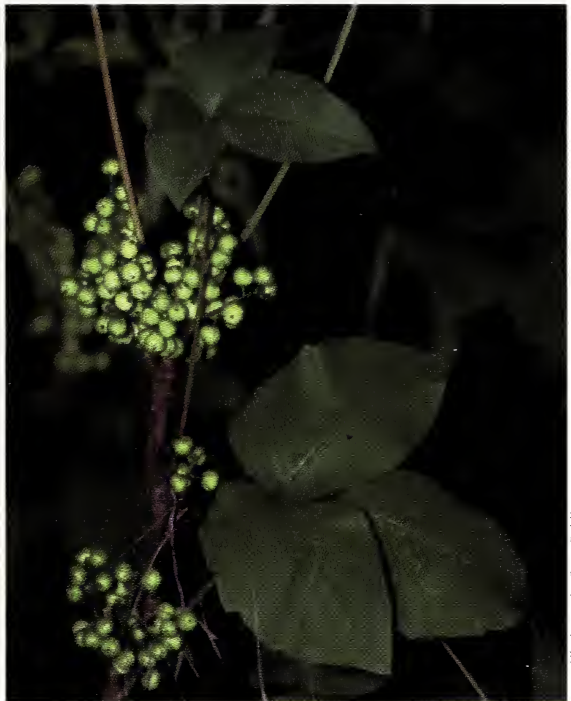


Black Widow.

Poison Ivy.



Western Rattlesnake.



Besides rocks and rapids, these are the three most common hazards visitors may encounter in the canyon. Take care to avoid them!

All photos by Jane Kohling

HUNTING AND FISHING

Within Hells Canyon NRA, the Snake River forms the boundary between the states of Oregon and Idaho. Licenses are required to hunt and fish in each state, however, only one state's license is required to fish the river from a boat.

Read the fish and game laws. Be sure you understand them and follow them. Bag limits, seasons, and other requirements vary between the states and enforcement is strict.

Fish in the Snake River include cold water species such as steelhead, salmon and rainbow trout. However, the river also supports warm water species such as bass, crappie, and catfish. In addition, Hells Canyon is one of the last strongholds of the giant white sturgeon.



Yearling black bear. Although the canyon has a healthy bear population, they are usually not a problem at campsites.



Many early canyon settlers supplemented their food and income with sturgeon, selling meat and caviar. Today, barbless hooks are required for sturgeon fishing. Fish may not be taken out of the water while handling, and must be released promptly.

Bear, deer, and elk hunting is available on both sides of the canyon. Mountain goats can be hunted by special permit in Idaho and very few bighorn sheep permits may be available in either Idaho or Oregon. In the river breaks, chukar hunting is a popular fall activity.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Hells Canyon is rich in historic and prehistoric sites which are both fragile and irreplaceable. Enjoy them but leave them intact for the visitors who follow you.

All artifacts and cultural sites in the canyon are protected by law from vandalism, destruction or theft. Collection of historic and prehistoric artifacts is prohibited. If you see someone removing artifacts or damaging archaeological sites, please note the location and report it to the Forest Service or local law enforcement officials immediately.

VISITOR FACILITIES

HELLS CANYON CREEK RECREATION SITE

This site serves as the primary launching point for float trips on the Snake River, and is the only location in Hells Canyon where the Snake River is accessible by a two-lane paved road.

During the summer, a staffed visitor information station with interpretive exhibits and a small theater provides river users and other visitors with information about the river and Hells Canyon. Videos are shown in the theater upon request.

Information on visitor information station hours is available by calling either of the river information/reservation lines on the inside back cover.



The Visitor Information Station at Hells Canyon Creek Recreation Site is staffed during the primary river season. River users check in here before launching. Videos and interpretive exhibits are available.

KIRKWOOD HISTORIC RANCH

The Kirkwood Ranch is accessible by boat, or by hiking the Snake River National Recreation Trail which begins at Pittsburg Landing, approximately 6 miles downriver.

The historic ranch on Kirkwood Bar offers a taste of canyon life in the 1930s. Visitors are welcome to stop at the museum and learn about ranching life in the canyon. This was Grace Jordan's *Home Below Hells Canyon*. Displays in the log bunkhouse also contain prehistoric artifacts and interpret early Native American occupation in the canyon.

A short 3/4 mile hike up Kirkwood Creek takes visitors to the Carter Mansion, an unusual vertical-log home built in 1920 by Dick Carter, a canyon resident who made his money manufacturing and selling moonshine during the Prohibition era.

Jane Rohling

Pittsburg Landing is accessible year-round by river or via the steep, winding Pittsburg Road. Be sure your brakes and transmission are in good shape before starting this breathtaking drive!



The Jordan House was originally built by Leonard and Kenneth Johnson before Len Jordan and Dick Maxwell purchased the ranch in 1932. The log bunkhouse that now serves as the museum was built by Dick and Bonnie Sterling in 1952, when Bud Wilson owned Kirkwood.

Jane Rohling



PITTSBURG LANDING

Pittsburg Road, also called Deer Creek Road, is the only public road that provides year-round access to the Idaho side of the Snake River within Hells Canyon NRA. At Pittsburg Landing there are recreational opportunities for visitors traveling by either river or road.

A concrete boat ramp and apron are provided for launch or takeout of river trips. A seasonally-staffed visitor contact station, restrooms and screened dressing areas are available near the ramp.

There are two campgrounds, one near Pittsburg Landing (about 1/4 mile from the river) and one on the river at the Upper Landing. There are some handicapped accessible sites at each campground.

The Snake River National Recreation Trail begins near the Upper Landing. The trailhead parking area can accommodate vehicles pulling trailers and there is a loading ramp and hitching posts for horses.



Jane Rohling

Interior of the Sterling bunkhouse, now a small museum, at the Kirkwood Ranch.

There are many pictographs and petroglyphs in Hells Canyon, mysterious artwork left by prehistoric inhabitants. All cultural sites—prehistoric or historic—are protected by law.



Jane Rohling



The shady orchard in the yard at Cache Creek makes it an inviting place in the heat of summer. Visitor information and interpretive exhibits are available to visitors year-round.



Horsedrawn farm implements were dismantled and carried into Hells Canyon piece by piece on the backs of pack animals, or brought in by boat.

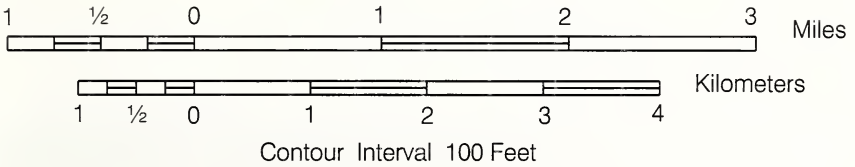
CACHE CREEK RANCH

This ranch is the northern-most portal on the Snake River within Hells Canyon NRA. Historically part of the Dobbin and Huffman Sheep Co. that flourished until the 1930s, it now serves as a shaded oasis for river travelers in the scenic portion of the Snake River.



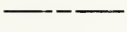




The expansive shady lawns and fruit orchard at Cache Creek attract both wildlife and people during the summer months. A small visitor information station provides information about the river and exhibits interpreting unique aspects of the canyon's natural and cultural history.

The Wild & Scenic SNAKE RIVER Guide 1997

Scale 1:63,360 or 1"=1 Mile





SYMBOLS

-  Wild & Scenic River Boundary
-  Wilderness Boundary
-  National Forest Boundary
- 247 ● River Mileage Marker
-  Campground or Campsite
-  River Access
-  Forest Service Information/Permit Station
-  Point of Interest
- Building

OWNERSHIP

-  Hells Canyon Wilderness
-  Hells Canyon National Recreation Area
-  National Forest Land
-  Wild & Scenic River
-  State
-  BLM
-  Private

ROADS

- Paved 
- Unpaved 

HOW TO USE THIS MAP

Format of map text: The maps and map logs read from the bottom up on each page, as if one were in a boat facing downriver. To the left of the narrative is the column labeled “River Mile”; this mileage begins with mile 247.0 at Hells Canyon Dam. Mileage is measured from the confluence of the Snake and Columbia rivers.

Camping: Camping is permitted only at sites designated in this guide. Descriptions have been provided in the text for the most popular campsites. Other sites are designated only by the camping symbol on the map.

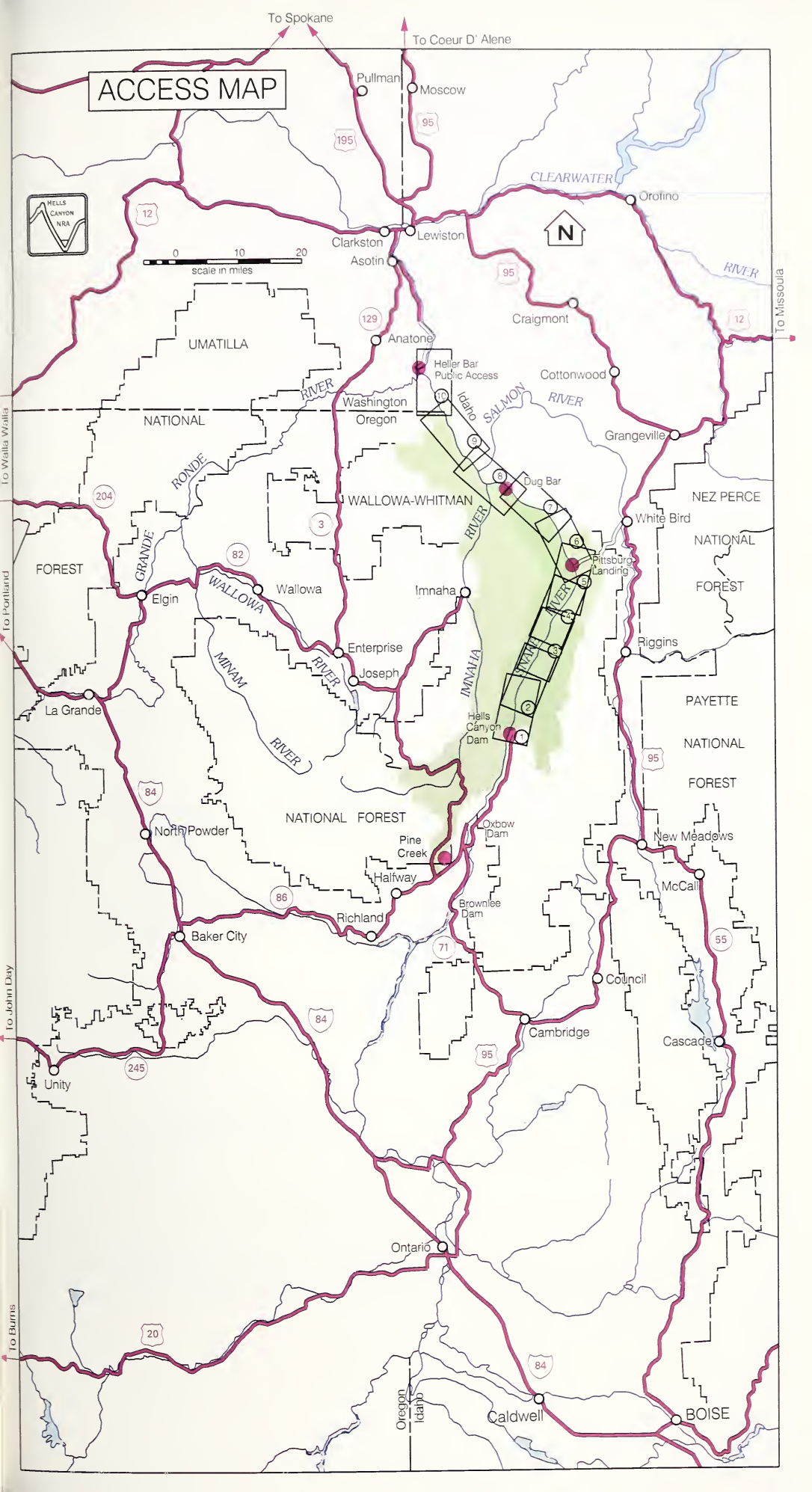
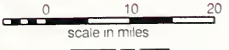
Rapids: An asterisk (*) before the name of a rapid indicates a major rapid of Class III or above.

Administration: Although Hells Canyon National Recreation Area encompasses portions of the Wallowa–Whitman, Nez Perce and Payette national forests, it is administered entirely by the Wallowa–Whitman National Forest.

A view of Kirkwood Bar from the Snake River National Recreation Trail. (Idaho side, looking upriver)



ACCESS MAP



To Waila Walla

To Portland

To John Day

To Burns

To Spokane

To Coeur D'Alene

To Missoula

Oregon
Idaho

BOISE

HANDLING THE SNAKE

Rafting or powerboating the rapids of Hells Canyon is not recommended for the inexperienced or poorly equipped. For floaters, portaging or lining through or around many of the rapids is difficult, if not impossible. For powerboaters, open bows or overloaded boats are dangerous in rapids. It is strongly recommended that prior to running these rapids you stop and scout the water for the best and safest route. If you are at all uncertain about your whitewater skills, go with an experienced professional outfitter/guide service that is licensed on this river.

Rapids will change considerably with different flows; some will become more turbulent and others will disappear. Water flows may vary from 5,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) in summer to 70,000 cfs or more in spring runoff. Since the river is controlled by dams, flows can vary from day to day and even hour to hour. You can obtain current and projected flow information by calling Idaho Power Company's Snake River information line at (800) 422-3143.

INTERNATIONAL SCALE OF RAPIDS

Whitewater rapids are rated on a scale of one through six, indicating the difficulty of each rapid at medium water level. Remember that rapids can change radically as river flows fluctuate. Be sure you know how to read the water, and scout rapids from shore if necessary to find the best route.

Class I

Very Easy—small, regular waves and riffles; few or no obstacles; little maneuvering required.

Class II

Easy—small waves with some eddies, low ledges, and slow rock gardens; moderate difficulty, some maneuvering required.

Class III

Medium—high and irregular; strong eddies; narrow, but clear passages that require expertise in maneuvering; scouting from the shore recommended.

Class IV

Difficult—long rapids with powerful, irregular waves, dangerous rocks, and boiling eddies; precise maneuvering and scouting from the shore imperative; take all possible safety precautions.

Class V

Very Difficult—long rapids with wild turbulence and extremely congested routes that require complex maneuvering; a danger to your life and boat and near the limits of navigation.

Class VI

The Limits of Navigation—rarely run; a definite hazard to your life.

The Snake is a big river with power many river users have never experienced. You must treat this river with respect; your life depends on it. The river doesn't care!

The table below gives a summary of the ratings applied to some of the important rapids in Hells Canyon at both low and high flows.

LENGTH OF TRIP

Floaters should allow two to three days for the trip from Hells Canyon Creek Recreation Site to Pittsburg Landing, and four to six days to Heller Bar, especially during low river flows.

Power boaters should be aware that there is no gasoline available at Hells Canyon Creek, Pittsburg Landing or anywhere upriver from Heller Bar, WA. Be sure you have enough fuel to complete the trip into and back out of Hells Canyon!

To help you plan your trip, the table below gives some important reference points on the river and their distances from Hells Canyon Creek Recreation Site (HCC), Pittsburg Landing (PL), and the Lewiston/Clarkston Valley (L/C, at Hellsgate State Park).

Locaton	River Mile	From HCC	From PL	From L/C Valley
Hells Canyon Creek	247.0	0	32.6	104
Wild Sheep Rapid	241.4	5.6	26.4	98.4
Granite Creek Rapid	239.2	7.8	24.6	96.2
Rush Creek Rapid	231.5	15.5	16.4	88.5
Kirkwood Ranch	220.5	26.5	5.6	77.5
Pittsburg Landing	214.9	32.1	0	71.9
Dug Bar	196.2	50.8	18.7	53.2
Imnaha River	191.7	55.3	23.2	48.7
Salmon River	188.3	58.7	26.6	45.3
Cache Creek	177.0	70.0	37.9	34.0
Heller Bar	168.3	78.7	46.5	25.3
L/C Valley	143.0	104	71.5	0

Rapid	Low Flow	High Flow
Wild Sheep	IV	V
Granite Creek	IV	V
Lower Bernard Creek	IV	III
Waterspout	IV	III
Rush Creek	III	IV
Imnaha	III	III
Wild Goose	II	III

241.2 Geology Note: Wild Sheep Rapids

These rapids were formed from large rocks that were carried to the river by a catastrophic debris flow or waterspout.

241.2 *Wild Sheep Rapids

Class IV; always scout! Located below Bull Creek; turbulent at all flows and the longest rapid on the river.

241.2 Wild Sheep

Campsite 75 yards from river below Wild Sheep Creek, water. Stopping point to scout rapids; large group.

241.5 Birch Springs

Rocky beach, water supply scant; medium group.

241.8 Sand Dunes

Good landing, sandy beach, no water; small group.

242.1 Battle Creek

Good landing, tie up 100 yards down river from creek. Shade; capacity large group. Second campsite located above creek on bench between river and cabin; tie up at creek; large group.

243.2 Historical Note: Pit Houses

The slope at the upper end of the bar is pocked with depressions where the semi-subterranean pithouses of prehistoric people once stood. Covered with a frame of branches and bark or hide, these shelters provided comfortable winter homes in the mild climate of the canyon.

242.3 Historical Note: Barton Cabin

The cabin, built by Ralph Barton in 1932, is located about 200 yards from the Snake River, upriver from Battle Creek. The Winchester Mine claim, about 2 miles up the creek, was worked from about 1910–1916 but produced very little gold.

243.0 Warm Springs

Shade, rocky beach; large group.

243.4 Chimney Bar

Shade, no water; large group.

243.7 Rocky Point Rapids

Class II; roller coaster waves, rock to ID side of center.

243.7 Rocky Point

Shade, no water, good landing; medium group.

244.7 Brush Creek

Sandy beaches below creek, water in creek; medium group.

244.7 Brush Creek Rapids

Class II; roller coaster waves down center.

245.2 Square Beach

Sandy beach; small group. Old mining claim.

245.8 Lamont Springs

Beach, water; large group. Old mining claim.

245.9 Historical Note: Stud Creek

Named for Gabe Teeples' stud horse that wandered off in the winter of 1910 or 1911 and fathered colts on Summit Ridge for several years.

245.9 Stud Creek

Shade, water; large group. Trail access (1 mile) from Hells Canyon Creek Recreation Site.

246.7 Cliff Mountain Rapids

Class II; current flows against rock wall on Idaho side.

247.0 Hells Canyon Creek Recreation Site

Small visitor information station with exhibits and theater is staffed during summer season. Toilets, boat ramp, public telephone. Day use only, no water or camping. Limited day and overnight parking available.

*Identifies major rapids of Class III and above.



Upper Oregon Hole

Three Creek

Three Creek
Rapids



Black Mountain

Bear Mountain

WALLOWA-WHITMAN

Cache Creek

Cache Creek

Granite Rapids

Lower Granite Creek

Upper Granite Creek

HELLS CANYON

Bull Creek

Wild Sheep Creek

HELLS CANYON

Wild Sheep

Wild Sheep Rapids

Birch Springs

Sand Dunes

Battle Creek

Barton Cabin

NATIONAL

NEZ PERCE

Beaver Dam Creek

NATIONAL

WILDERNESS

FOREST

Devils Farm

WILDERNESS

FOREST

Battle Creek

Rapids

Hot Spring

Warm Springs

Warm Springs Bar

Chimney Bar

Rocky Point Rapids

Rocky Point

Rapids

Brush Creek Rapids

Brush Creek

Brush Creek

Square Beach

FOREST

Stud Creek

Stud Creek

PAYETTE

Cliff Mountain Rapids

Hells Canyon Creek Recreation Site

Hells Canyon Boat Ramp

NATIONAL

FOREST

Steamboat Creek

Deep

Red Gulch

Red Ledge

1

235.2 Historical Note: McGaffee Cabin

The cabin, on the bar above the river, was the second one built on the site by Bill Hiltley, who homesteaded here in 1901. The place was sold to Fred and Iphigenia "Gene" McGaffee and Billy McGaffee in 1915. Gene wrote, "We knew we were getting into a lonely, untamed region, but it was good cow country and we never regretted the move." See photo on page 13.

235.2 *Upper Bernard Creek Rapids

Class II to III at all flows. Depending on skill level, you may want to scout. Located below Bernard Creek.

236.2 Historical Note: Saddle Creek

Originally settled in 1895 by Fred Jensen and Tim McCarty, Saddle Creek was the home of the Pete Wilson family from 1916–1937. Violet Wilson Shirley and her 7 brothers and sisters grew up here. Violet has been a volunteer host at the Kirkwood Historic Ranch for many years.

236.2 Saddle Creek

Difficult landing at flows over 30,000 cfs; tie up downstream of creek. Water, shade on upper bench to the north; large group.

236.6 Hastings

Gravel beach in low water; old placer mine; medium group.

237.0 Lower Dry Gulch

Good landing, shade, spring just below the rim of the river bank; large group.

237.3 Upper Dry Gulch

Good landing, no water, shade; large group.

237.7 Oregon Hole

Shade, no water; large group.

247.8 Upper Oregon Hole

Good flood, poor powerboat landing, lots of boulders; small group.

238.0 Three Creek

Good water, shade, steep climb to bench. Difficult access below creek; large group.

238.2 *Three Creek Rapids

Class II or Class III, roller coaster waves.

239.0 Campsite

Camping permitted.

239.2 *Granite Rapids

Class IV at all levels up to 50,000 cfs, always scout! Located just downstream from Lower Granite Creek campsite. Trail access on both sides of the river. These rapids change as flows fluctuate. Beware of large drop with holes and big waves. A large rock submerged in the center creates a hole with much turbulence at all flows.

239.2 Cache Creek

Difficult boat landing. High grassy bar downstream from creek, water off-site; large group.

239.5 Lower Granite Creek

Tie up 200 yards below creek and follow trail up to bench. Water, shade; large group.

239.6 Upper Granite Creek

Tie up in rocky cove; campsite is 75 yards up trail on a grassy bench above creek. Shade, water; large group.

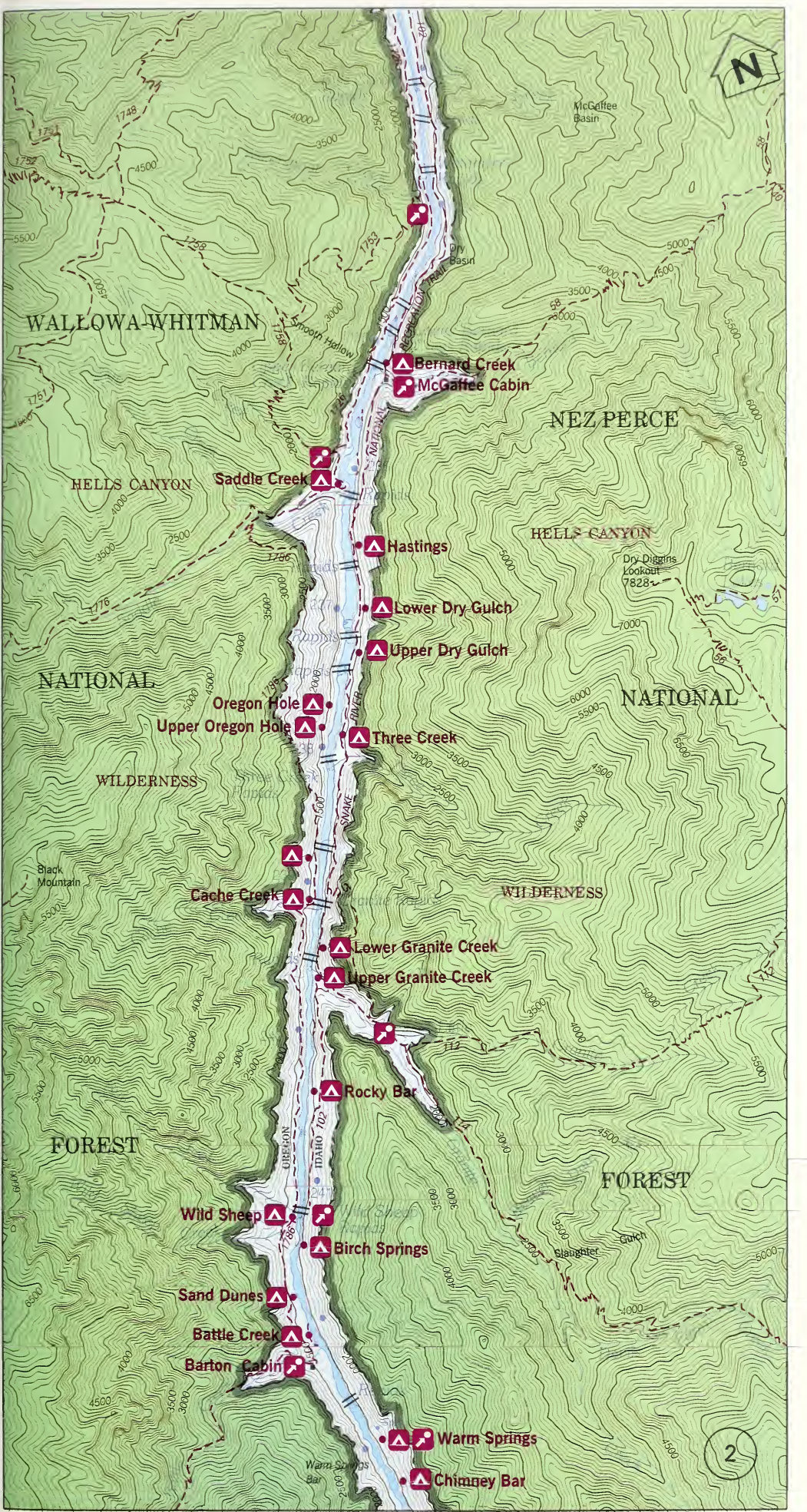
239.7 Historical Note: Hibbs Ranch

A homestead claim was filed one mile up Granite Creek by Martin Hibbs in 1911. His daughter, Lenora Barton, found him murdered outside his cabin in July, 1934. The cabin had burned down and the remains of a second, unidentified body were found in the ashes. The murder was never solved.

240.4 Rocky Bar

Rocky beach, shade, no water; large group.

*Identifies major rapids of Class III and above.



229.3 Historical Note: Sheep Creek Cabin

Homesteaded in 1884 by William McLeod, a Scotsman and Civil War veteran. After his death, the county sold the place to Fred and Billy McGaffee, who traded it to Lenora Barton for her place on the Imnaha River in 1935. Sold to Bud Wilson in 1952, then to the FS in the 1970s.

229.4 Sheep Creek

Fair landing; pull in at creek. Camp is on upriver side of creek; cabin on bench north of creek is occupied under special use permit. Shade, water; large group.

229.6 *Sheep Creek Rapids

Class II to III: some rocks to avoid.

229.9 Johnson Bar Landing

Beach, water available at Sheep Creek; large group.

231.4 Geology Note: Rush Creek Rapids and Hat Point

Rush Creek Rapids was formed by a large landslide that dammed the Snake River to a depth of nearly 400 feet. Rocks were dislodged from the Idaho side nearly 2,000 feet above the river. Hat Point Lookout Tower, perched atop the highest point on the Oregon rim of Hells Canyon (elevation: 6,982 feet), can be seen on the horizon above Rush Creek.

231.4 Rush Creek

Marginal landing located downstream from rapid; rocky beach. Water dries up in summer; large group.

231.4 *Rush Creek Rapids

Class III or IV, depending on flows; more turbulent during higher water. At head of rapids, near center of river, a large rock creates a huge hole with much turbulence at all flows. Rush Creek is marked by a large rock near the bottom of the rapid that is highly visible except during extremely high water. Always scout!

231.7 Sluice Creek Rapids

No scouting necessary; large roller coaster waves.

231.8 Historical Note: Winniford Place

Among the oldest ranches in the canyon, Alex Warnock ran cattle here in the early 1880s. Clem Marks patented a homestead entry in 1909 and built a dogtrot-style log cabin—twin cabins connected by a covered breezeway. Willy Winniford's family settled here from 1913–23; his brothers, Walter and John, settled at Rush Creek and Homestead Ridge.

231.8 Sluice Creek

Difficult landing. Very difficult climb to bench located on downriver side of creek; large group.

233.2 Bills Creek Rapids

Class II or III, roller coaster waves.

233.7 *Waterspout Rapids

Class III to IV, depending on flows. A rock at lower end of rapids near Oregon side of center creates an unexpected hole at some levels. The rapids wash out in high water. Scouting recommended from Oregon side.

234.5 Geology Note: Waterspout Landslide

From here to Waterspout Rapids, note the chaotic rocks on the Oregon side. They are from a giant slump or landslide that filled the canyon to a depth of 200 to 300 feet.

235.0 *Lower Bernard Creek Rapids

Class III to IV, depending on flow. Approximately 300 yards below Upper Bernard site. About an 8 foot drop, steep but not vertical; big standing wave about 6 feet high in low flows; washed out in high flows.

235.1 Bernard Creek

Good landing for rafts downstream from creek on gravel beach; not a good powerboat site. Shade, water, hike up trail 100 yards; capacity large.

*Identifies major rapids of Class III and above.



- 223.7 Temperance Creek Ranch**
Former sheep ranch; not available for camping.
- 224.2 Big Bar Airstrip**
Only public landing strip on Idaho side of river, not maintained; public use at own risk.
- 224.5 Big Bar**
Fair powerboat landing, rocky. No shade, no water; large group.
- 224.5 Historical Note: Myers Creek**
In the 1930s, blacksmith/miner Ace Duncan was hired to drive a tunnel through the ridge that separates Myers Creek from Big Bar. Working from both sides of the ridge, it took 81-year-old Duncan two years to complete the tunnel. An irrigation pipe through the tunnel allowed upper Big Bar to be planted with 13 acres of alfalfa.
- 224.5 Dry Gulch**
Shade, beach, no water; large group.
- 225.2 Caribou Creek**
Good floatboat landing, poor powerboat landing. Shade; large group. Located below Caribou Creek.
- 225.0 Geology Note: River Terraces**
From here to mile 223, notice the wide river terraces which were formed by the accumulation of debris eroded from the canyon walls and deposited in alluvial fans. The terraces were subsequently leveled by the Bonneville and other floods.
- 226.2 Lower Quartz Creek**
Good landing, no water, some shade; large group. Located below Quartz Creek.
- 226.5 Upper Quartz Creek**
Rocky landing, poor powerboat site. No water, little shade; large group. Located above Quartz Creek.
- 227.0 Geology Note: High Bar**
High bar is the result of a catastrophic landslide, followed by the formation of a large gravel bar during the Bonneville Flood, about 15,000 years ago.
- 227.5 Geology and Historical Notes: Pine Bar**
The yellow-stained rocks mark a mineralized zone along a fault called a "gossan." Deeply weathered parts of the gossan form alum deposits. Floyd Harvey, early outfitter, boated his Hells Canyon Excursions guests to a camp at this site in the 1960s. The main lodge and six tent cabins were burned by an arsonist in 1974.
- 227.5 Pine Bar**
Beach, shade, water. Located below Willow Creek; large group.
- 227.9 Sand Creek**
Administrative cabin used by ID and OR fish and wildlife agencies and OR State Police.
- 228.0 Historical Note: McGrady's Lodge**
Kyle McGrady, early Snake River mailboat captain, operated a lodge here in the late 1940s that accommodated 50 people.
- 228.2 Upper Sand Creek**
Poor powerboat landing. No shade or water; medium group.
- 228.6 Geology Note: Dry Diggins View**
Dry Diggins Ridge on the Idaho side, elevation 7,828 feet, is the highest point in Hells Canyon that is visible from the river on the ID side. It is 6,400 feet above the waters of the Snake.
- 228.6 Historical Note: Eagle's Nest**
The river trail originally climbed over the rim below Yreka Creek, then back down to Sand Creek. During the winter of 1947–48, a Forest Service crew cut through the rock overhang above the river, creating the stretch of trail known as the "Eagle's Nest" because there was once an eagle's nest above the trail.
- 228.6 Yreka Bar**
Poor landing. Shade, no water; large group.
- 229.0 Steep Creek**
Low-water campsite. Beach, good landing below creek; medium group.



WALLOWA-WHITMAN

HELLS CANYON

NATIONAL

WILDERNESS

FOREST

NEZ PERCE

NATIONAL

FOREST

HELLS CANYON

WILDERNESS

4

216.3 Wild and Scenic River Boundary

Under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the river north of this point is classified as *scenic*, south of the line is *wild*.

216.4 Fish Trap Bar

Sandy beach, good landing, no water; large group.

217.0 Corral Creek

Cobble beach, shade, water upriver 200 yards; large group.

218.3 Cat Gulch

Easy landing, small beach, shade; medium group.

218.8 Kirby Creek Lodge

Privately owned land, lodge; not available for camping.

218.9 Middle Kirby Rapids

Class II or III, depending on water level. Large roller coaster waves.

219.6 Russell Bar

Fair landing for rafts, poor landing for powerboats. Shade, no water; large group.

220.0 Yankee Bar

Beach, no water, little shade; small group.

220.3 Kirkwood Bar Campsites

Four sites within easy walking distance of Kirkwood Historic Ranch. Shade, toilets, tables; large group at each site.

220.7 Historical Note: Kirkwood Ranch

Although people have lived on Kirkwood Bar since prehistoric times, the most famous resident was Len Jordan (1932–43), who later became Governor of Idaho and a U.S. Senator. His wife, Grace, wrote *Home Below Hells Canyon* about her family's years at Kirkwood Ranch.

220.7 Kirkwood Historic Ranch

Public welcome: historic ranch, museum, interpretive site, staffed year-round. No drinking water available. May also be accessed by an off-road vehicle trail down Kirkwood Creek. Communications available to report fires/emergencies.

221.0 Slaughter Gulch

Good landing; large group.

221.6 Historical Note: Half Moon's Death

Named for a Nez Perce man. Half Moon and his horse fell to their deaths near Suicide Point, probably in the 1870s. An 1866 silver dollar was found with the remains in 1892.

221.6 Half Moon Bar

Easy landing, small site, no water; medium group.

222.0 Gracie Bar

Good floatboat landing, shade; large group.

222.2 Two Corral Creek

Beach, shade, no water; large group.

222.6 Salt Creek

Beach, shade, water at Salt Creek; large group.

222.8 Suicide Point

Trail carved in cliffs over 400 feet above river offers a spectacular view—worth the climb!

222.9 Hominy Bar

Good landing for float or powerboats; large group at low water levels.

223.0 Geology Note: Vertical Dikes

From Suicide Point to Pittsburg Landing, the river cuts through nearly vertical dikes which are the oldest rocks in Hells Canyon—over 300 million years old. The Great Eastern Mine (gold and copper) was located on the slope at the lower end of Big Bar.

223.7 Historical Note: Temperance Creek Ranch

In the early 1880s, Alex and Bob Warnock came to Temperance Creek to do some placer mining and raise cattle. When the packhorse carrying their supply of whiskey rolled on the trail, they were left high and dry for the winter, hence the name "Temperance Creek." Purchased by Kenneth Johnson in the 1930s and operated as a sheep ranch by Kenneth and later his son, Greg, until the late 1970s.



5

- 209.4 Tryon Creek**
Good landing, shade, water at creek; large group.
- 209.8 Camp Creek**
Some shade, no water; large group.
- 210.0 Somers Creek**
Rocky landing, water, shade; large group.
- 210.4 Lower Big Canyon**
No water, sandy beach; small group.
- 210.8 Big Canyon**
Fair landing, water, shade; large group.
- 212.0 McCarty Creek**
Difficult landing, no water; medium group.
- 212.4 Davis Creek**
Good landing, no water; medium group.
- 213.0 Geology Note: Pillow Basalt**
From mile 213–209, the river cuts through thick deposits of *pillow basalt* and *breccia*. These rocks formed on the sides of a giant undersea volcano about 230 million years ago.
- 213.0 Historical Notes: Proposed Pleasant Valley Dam, 1954**
A 1954 proposal sited Pleasant Valley Dam about 1/4 mile below the creek. The dam, 535' high with the world's 5 largest generators, would have backed up water to the base of Hells Canyon Dam. Yellow paint on bluffs on both sides indicate the dam's proposed location and height.
- 213.3 Pleasant Valley**
Boat landing very difficult at some water levels. Shade, water 150 yards upstream from camp; medium group. Accessible via off-road vehicle trail from Pittsburg Landing.
- 213.5 *Pleasant Valley Rapids**
Class II or III, depending on water level. Rocks above rapids, turbulent water.
- 214.5 Pittsburg Campground**
Campground, 28 sites, about 1/4 mile from river, some shade, no water, toilet, table, some handicapped accessible sites.
- 214.7 Geology Note: Mt. Mazama Ash**
The layer of whitish sediment in the outcrop on the OR side is ash that was deposited about 6,800 years ago, when a huge volcanic eruption over 200 miles southwest of here blew up Mt. Mazama, forming Crater Lake. Rainfall washed the ash into depressions where it was concentrated in deposits from several inches to several feet deep.
- 214.8 Pittsburg Administrative Site**
Administrative site, not available for camping. Communications available here; report fires and emergencies here or at Pittsburg Landing boat ramp when staffed.
- 214.9 Pittsburg Landing**
Road access, boat launch and float apron, visitor information and toilets. Communications available here; report fires and emergencies here or at Pittsburg Administrative Site.
- 215.7 Wilson Eddy**
Good landing, shade, no water; large group.
- 216.2 Campsite**
Road access, good float boat landing, shade, no water; small group.
- 216.3 Upper Pittsburg**
Six campsites, road access, parking, tables, toilets, partially handicapped accessible, some shade, no water.
- 216.3 Geology and Historical Notes: Pittsburg Landing**
The large valley at Pittsburg Landing, cuts through easily-eroded sedimentary rocks about 220–165 million years old. About 15 million years ago, volcanic eruptions from fissure dikes formed the dark brown layers of Columbia River Basalt on the north skyline. Native Americans wintered here for thousands of years, including Toohoolhoolzote's Nez Perce band from about 1840–1870. Homesteaders and ranchers began to settle here in the 1880s.

*Identifies major rapids of Class III and above.



RIVER MILE

MAP 7

196.6 Dug Bar Landing

Primitive boat launch area, high-clearance 4WD road access. Toilet, no water; medium group.

196.7 Geology Note: Bonneville Flood

Gray gravels, deposited by the Bonneville Flood, are visible on the hillside about 200 feet above the river on the ID side.

196.7 Historical Note: Nez Perce Crossing

In the spring of 1877, the Nez Perce bands from the Wallowa Valley were ordered by the U.S. Government to leave their homeland and go to the reservation in Lapwai, ID. They crossed the river safely with their families, all their belongings, horses and cattle at Dug Bar in full spring flood.

198.1 Dug Creek

Water, small site; small group.

198.4 Robinson Gulch

Shade, no water; large group.

199.2 Historical Note: Massacre of Chinese Miners, Deep Creek

In May of 1887, a band of outlaws tortured and murdered 31 Chinese miners at the mouth of Deep Creek for the gold believed to be hidden in their camp. Three men stood trial for the atrocities but none were convicted. No one was ever punished for the crime. Two stone walls against a rock outcrop are all that remain of the Chinese camp.

199.2 Deep Creek

Low water site, poor landing. Pull in near creek and carry gear over boulders 20 yards to site on upstream side of creek.

201.9 Bar Creek

Poor powerboat site, water dries up, shade; large group.

204.5 Bob Creek

Sandy beach, no water, shade; large group.

205.0 Geology Note: Columbia River Basalts

At this point, flows of the Columbia River Basalt can be seen at river level. The distinctive columnar joints formed during the cooling of the molten lava.

205.4 Historical Note: Copper Bar

Also known as Rankin Bar, for Billy Rankin who discovered copper on Copper Mountain in 1900. He filed a claim and built a stone cabin about 3/4 mile up Copper Creek. Rankin worked his claim for many years but never struck it rich. His 2nd cabin, built in the 1930s on Copper Bar, became the mess hall of the resort run by boatman Dick Rivers in the 1950s.

205.4 Copper Creek Resort

Lodge, cabins under special use permit; not available for camping.

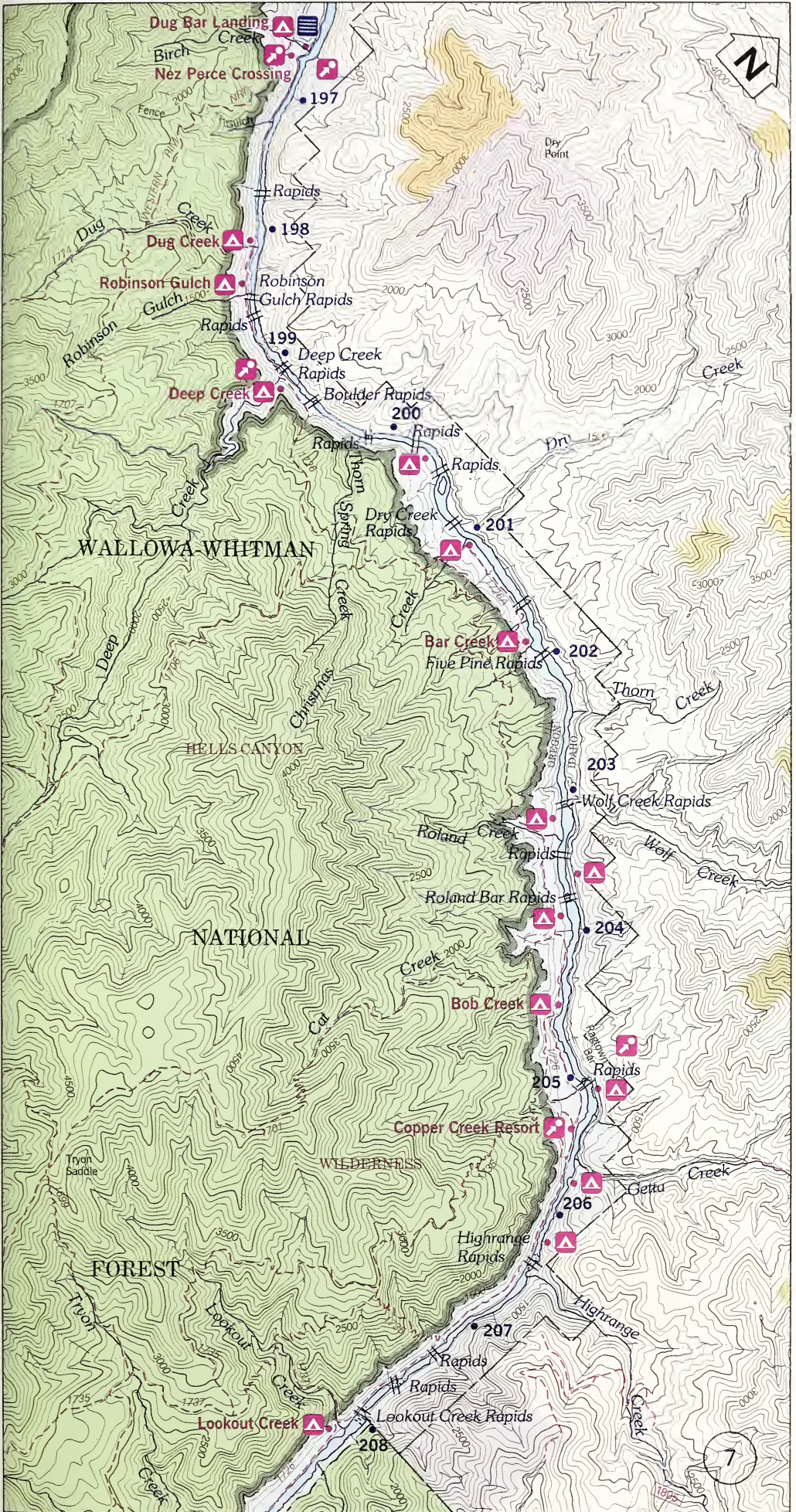
208.0 Lookout Creek

Shallow landing, no water, some shade; large group.



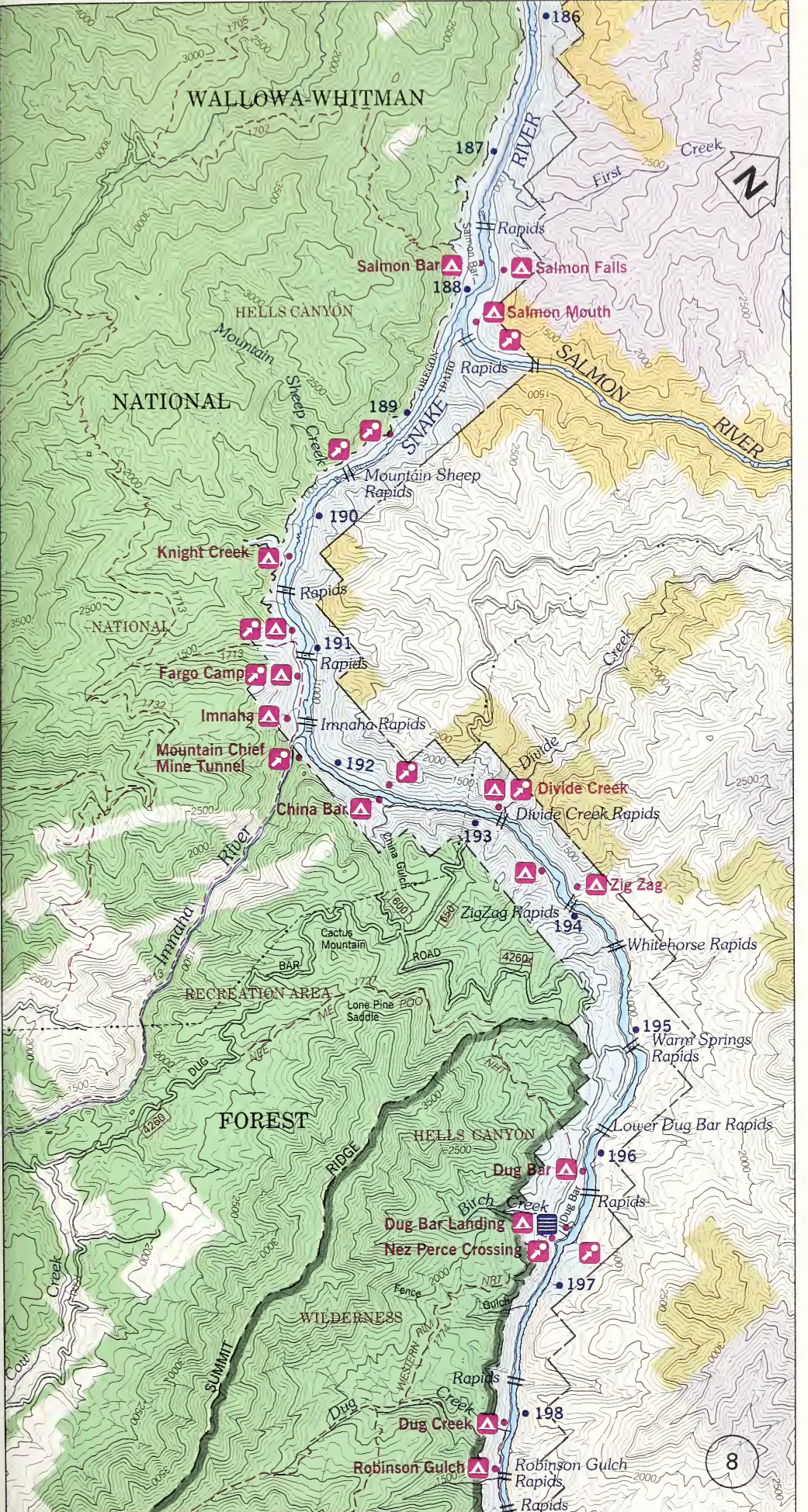
Jane Kofling

Mile 205.0: Interesting columnar formations of Columbia River Basalt are visible at river level. Some have been tipped on their sides, the tops of the columns looking like a giant honeycomb.



- 187.8 Salmon Bar**
Some beach area; large group.
- 188.0 Salmon Falls**
Beach, no shade; large group.
- 188.3 Geology Note: Salmon River**
The Salmon River is free-flowing from its headwaters to its confluence with the Snake. Some geologists believe that, about 2 million years ago, the Salmon was the major river and the Snake was its tributary.
- 188.3 Salmon Mouth**
Beach, little shade, no water; large group.
- 189.2 Historical Note: Proposed Dam Site, 1958**
The letters "HMPNP" and white marks painted on the rocks indicate the location of the 670-foot High Mountain Sheep Dam, part of a project proposed by the Pacific Northwest Power Company in 1958.
- 189.8 Historical Note: Sinking of the *Imnaha*, Mtn. Sheep Rapids**
There are iron rings set in the rocks on both sides of the river. Cables were attached to the rings to help winch steamboats up through the rapids. When the cable became entangled, disabling the paddlewheel the *Imnaha* drifted back into the rapids, turned crosswise in the current, lodged between the canyon walls and broke up.
- 190.4 Knight Creek**
Good landing, shade, water; large group.
- 191.2 Fargo Camp**
Swift water for raft landing. Poor powerboat landing. No water; large group.
- 191.4 Historical Note: Eureka Mining Camp and Steamboat Landing**
During the first decade of the 20th century, the upper end of Eureka Bar was the location of the joint Fargo and Eureka company mining camps, and town site was established at the lower end of the bar. The stair-step foundation of the stamp mill/smelter and the foundation of the hotel/bunkhouse can still be seen. The steamboat landing used by the *Imnaha* and *Mountain Gem* was on the bar just below Eureka Creek.
- 191.6 Imnaha Rapids**
Class III in lower flows; heavy waves, some rocky areas. Washes out at high flows.
- 191.7 Imnaha**
Poor powerboat landing, pull in above the Imnaha confluence. Shade, no water; medium group.
- 191.9 Historical Note: Mountain Chief Mine Tunnel**
The 740-foot Mountain Chief Mine tunnel cuts clear through a ridge just above the confluence of the Snake and Imnaha rivers. The tunnel, completed in 1903, follows a mineralized zone, containing copper and iron, which formed along a fault. Part of the Eureka Mining, Smelting & Power Co. holdings. Gates have been installed in the tunnel to protect endangered Townsend's big-eared bats that use the mine as a hibernaculum during the winter months (closed 11/15–4/15).
- 192.4 China Bar**
Beach; large group.
- 192.5 Historical Note: Low Mountain Sheep Dam**
A 1954 proposal included a 275-foot concrete, gravity-type hydroelectric dam below China Gulch to act as a regulator for peak releases from the Pleasant Valley Dam upriver.
- 193.2 Archaeology Note: Divide Creek**
Artifacts uncovered when University of Idaho archaeologists excavated a site at the mouth of Divide Creek were dated at about 6,000 years old.
- 193.2 Divide Creek**
Low-water site above mouth of creek. Water, shade; large group.
- 194.0 Zig Zag**
Beach, no water; small group.
- 195.1 *Warm Springs Rapids**
Class II, Class III at high flow levels.
- 196.2 Dug Bar**
Rocky landing, road access, toilet, no water; medium group.

*Identifies major rapids of **Class III** and above.



177.7 Upper Cache Creek

Good landing, sandy beach, pack to bench from river; large group.

177.8 Historical Note: Sheep Shearing Sheds

The large sheep shearing sheds on the bar were part of the Dobbin and Huffman Sheep Co. holdings. The names of many members of shearing crews from the 1920s and 1930s have been written on the east wall of the shed with branding paint.

178.1 Garden Creek

Beach, shade, small low-water site; small group.

178.2 Cochran Island

Float camp only due to shallow river approach. Secluded, shade, no water; large group.

178.6 Historical Note: Coon Hollow

Humorous signs and “museum” of flotsam—items that washed up in the big eddy at Coon Hollow—make this a fun and interesting stop.

178.6 Coon Hollow

Some shade; large group.

179.9 Upper Cougar Bar

Beach, no water or shade, low-water site; medium group.

180.2 Scenic River Boundary

This is the lower end of the *scenic* portion of the Snake River in Hells Canyon. The river from here north to the Hells Canyon NRA boundary at the WA/OR state line has been recommended for *scenic* designation.

180.9 Lower Cottonwood Creek

Water, sandy beach; large group.

181.0 Historical Note: Imnaha Boiler

A boiler, possibly from the steamboat *Imnaha*, is embedded in the sandbank on the upriver side of the creek.

181.0 Geology Note: Limestone

Light gray limestone is steeply dipping and folded. This limestone formed in quiet sea water as the volcanic platform subsided about 220 million years ago.

181.3 Upper Cottonwood Creek

Water, shade, beach; large group.

181.5 Cactus Bar

Good landing, beach, no water; medium group.

181.8 Meat Hole

Beach, no water, small low-water site; small group.

182.0 Lower Jim Creek

Sandy beach, shade; large group.

182.2 Historical Note: Jim Creek

This creek is named for French–American Jim Gaillard, who homesteaded about 2–3 miles from the river. This site was also the location of the Treasure Group copper claims in the early 1900s. The small building near the river was a grain and supply storage shed where the mailboat could leave deliveries for the Jim Creek Ranch.

183.0 Sentinel Rock

Low water camp, sandy beach, no water; medium group.

183.4 Cook Creek

Sandy beach, water; medium group.

184.6 Geneva Bar

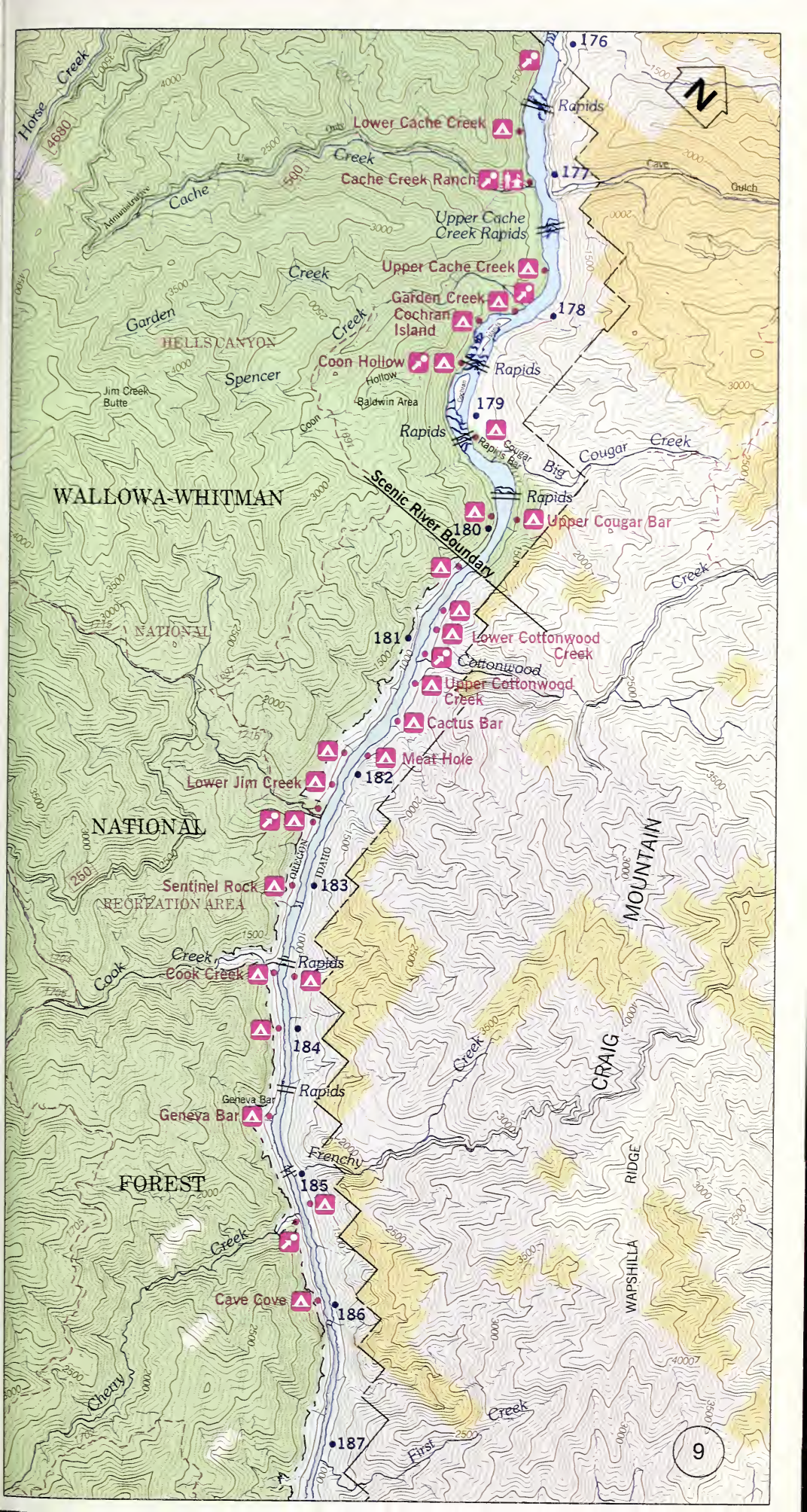
Sand and rock beach, no water; large group.

185.3 Historical Note: Cherry Creek Falls, Cherry Creek Ranch

Scenic little waterfall at the mouth of Cherry Creek. In 1848, Jay Dobbin sold the Cherry Creek Ranch, located about 2 miles up the creek, to three of his Basque shepherders. Seberino “Silver” Egana, Gus Malaxa, Toney Martiartu and later a fourth partner, Joe Onaindia ran the ranch until 1973.

185.9 Cave Cove

Sand beach, rock overhang provides shade, no water; medium group.



168.4 Heller Bar Boat Ramp

Public boat launch and landing area owned by the State of Washington and operated by the Bureau of Land Management. Toilets, parking.

168.7 Mouth of Grande Ronde River

The Grande Ronde, meaning "large valley," was named by French Canadian trappers. The large valley referred to is many miles upriver near LaGrande, OR.

168.8 Historical Note: Rogersburg

Rogersburg, WA, just upstream from the Grande Ronde River, was founded by the Rogers brothers, who had filed mining claims on the bar. They laid out the townsite and planned to sell lots, but were not very successful because, until 1937, there was no road access to the site.

170.0 Geology Note: Lime Hill (OR), Limestone Point (ID)

This limestone point was estimated to contain over 500 acres of exceptionally pure cement materials—an important ingredient in the construction of dams. However, transportation problems made quarrying unprofitable. Near here, a fault separates 220 million year old limestone from 15 million year old basalt. Geologists call this type of gap in the geological strata an *unconformity*.

172.8 Historical Note: Wild Goose Rapids and proposed China Garden Dam

The steamboat *Lewiston* was dispatched to pick up ore at the Great Eastern Mine (at Big Bar). The boat couldn't get through this rapid, hence the trip was a "wild goose chase." There is a steamboat lining ring in the rock at the head of the rapid on the WA side. Downstream from this rapid is the site of the 168' high China Garden Dam, proposed in the 1950s.

172.8 *Wild Goose Rapids

Class II, Class III at high flows.

175.0 Historical Note: Granite Slabs

The large blocks of granite stacked on the Idaho shore were quarried by Arthur Garlinghouse of Lewiston in the early 1900s. They were intended to be hauled to town by steamboat and used as window ledges and door sills at Lewiston Normal School (now Lewis–Clark State College).

176.0 China Garden Creek

Formerly known as the Madden Ranch, this area is currently owned by The Nature Conservancy.

176.0 OR/WA State Line

The state line is also the northern boundary of the HCNRA.

176.3 Historical Note: Stone House

About 300 yards from the river on the Idaho side there's an interesting stone house. Homesteaders in Hells Canyon sometimes built such cabins because wood was scarce.

176.8 Lower Cache Creek

Beach, no water or shade, small low-water site; small group.

177.0 Cache Creek Ranch (Administrative Site)

Northern entry to HCNRA—permit station, staffed year round. Visitor information and interpretive exhibits. Communications available—report fires and emergencies here. Day use only: shade, picnic tables, toilets. The large orchard provides fruit for visitors and attracts wildlife.

177.0 Historical Note: Cache Creek Ranch

Named by A.C. Smith who, while traveling to the 1876 treaty council at Lapwai, ID, found caches left by Indians on a bar near the creek's mouth. By 1913, Guy Huffman had homesteaded here. He partnered with his brother-in-law, Jay Dobbin until the 1930s, when Guy sold out. Cache Creek was part of the 10,000-acre Snake River holdings of the Dobbin and Huffman Sheep Co. They ran about 28,000 sheep.

*Identifies major rapids of Class III and above.



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WALLOWA WHITMAN
HELLS CANYON
NATIONAL
FOREST

Lower Cache Creek
Cache Creek Ranch
Upper Cache Creek
Upper Cache Creek Rapids

Captain Lewis
Rapids
Heller Bar
Boat Ramp

Wild Goose
Rapids

China Garden
Rapids

GRANDE
RONDE

Shovel
Creek

China
Garden
Creek

SNAKE
RIVER

SNAKE
RIVER

SNAKE
RIVER

Chimney
Creek

Chimney
Creek

Carroll
Creek

Carroll
Creek

China
Garden
Creek

China
Garden
Creek

Upper Cache
Creek
Rapids

Upper Cache
Creek
Rapids



Note: The sites below are north of the maps included in this book. They are boat launching locations between Heller Bar and the Lewiston/Clarkston Valley. We have listed them here to aid you in planning your trip.

137.2 Red Wolf Marina/Hells Canyon Resort

Private marina, boat launching facilities, Clarkston, WA.

139.4 Green Belt Ramp

Public boat ramp at the US Army Corps of Engineers office near the confluence of the Snake and Clearwater rivers in Clarkston, WA.

140.6 Southway Ramp

US Army Corps of Engineers public boat launching facilities, Lewiston, ID.

142.4 Swallows Park

US Army Corps of Engineers public boat launching facilities and restrooms, on WA side. USDA Forest Service, HCNRA Snake River Office is located at the south end of Swallows Park on Highway 129 (Riverside Drive).

143.4 Hells Gate State Park

ID state park marina, gas, boat launching facilities, restrooms.

145.4 Chief Looking Glass Park

Asotin, WA city park with boat launch/landing facilities, restrooms.

157.6 Couse Creek

Primitive boat launch on WA side.

165.0 Billy Creek

Administrative site owned by Idaho Fish and Game Department on ID side. Primitive boat launch on WA side.

For thousands of years Native Americans wintered in villages of semi-subterranean pit-houses, enjoying the canyon's plentiful game and mild climate. There are many village sites throughout the canyon.



Mez Perce National Historic Park

Martin Hibbs' homestead at Granite Creek. The two-story cabin in the photo was burned when Martin was murdered in 1934. (Mile 239.7)



Esther Hibbis

Florence Winniford Smith



Many children were packed into the canyon, along some of the most frightening trails in the country, on the backs of trusty pack animals. Here, Florence and Wilma Winniford are carried by "Old Buck," circa 1914. (Mile 231.8)

Four left-handed shearers working for Bud Wilson on the Kirkwood Ranch in the 1950s. (Mile 220.7)

Clark H. Neely



Gertie Winniford herds cattle near the High Trail (#1742) on the Hill Homestead, between Rush Creek and Yreka Creek. Three Winniford brothers and their families homesteaded in the Rush Creek/Sluice Creek area from 1913-1923. (Mile 220.7)

Bob Winniford



Some of the best whitewater in the country attracts both float and powerboat enthusiasts to the Snake River in Hells Canyon National Recreation Area.



ADDITIONAL HELLS CANYON NRA



Hells Canyon National Recreation Area

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest
P.O. Box 699
Clarkston, WA 99403

River Manager, River corridor info.

General Information: (509) 758-0616
Float Reservations: (509) 758-1957
Powerboat Reservations: (509) 758-0270

Hells Canyon National Recreation Area

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest
88401 Highway 82
Enterprise, OR 97828

Area Ranger

(541) 426-4978

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

P.O. Box 907
Baker City, OR 97814

Forest Supervisor

(541) 523-6391, TDD (541) 523-1405

Idaho Power Company

P.O. Box 70
Boise, ID 83707

For daily river flow level call:

(800) 422-3143

Idaho Fish and Game Dept.

1540 Warner
Lewiston, ID 83501

ID hunting/fishing regulations:

(208) 799-5010

Oregon State Police

Rt. 4 Box 4061
La Grande, OR 97850

OR hunting/fishing regulations:

(541) 963-7175

EMERGENCY, SEARCH AND RESCUE

Oregon State Police

La Grande, OR

Emergency: (541) 963-7174

Wallowa County Sheriff

Enterprise, OR

OR side emergency/search & rescue:

(541) 426-3131 (or 911)

Idaho County Sheriff

Grangeville, ID
(above the mouth of the Salmon River)

ID side emergency/search & rescue:

(208) 983-1100 (or 911)

Nez Perce County Sheriff

Lewiston, ID
(below the mouth of the Salmon River)

ID side emergency/search & rescue:

(208) 799-3131 (or 911)

OUTFITTER AND GUIDE SERVICES

For outfitter/guide service information or to report illegal outfitting, contact:

Idaho Outfitters & Guides Association

P.O. Box 95, Boise, ID 83701

(208) 342-1438

Idaho Outfitters & Guides Licensing Board

State House Mail, Boise, ID 83720

(208) 327-7380

Oregon Guides & Packers

P.O. Box 3797, Portland, OR 97208

(503) 234-3268



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